

REMARKS

Claims 1 – 20 are pending. In the above-identified Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 13, 15 – 17, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Rusnak ('056). Claims 2 – 5, 8, 11, 12 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rusnak in view of Smithies ('835). Claims 9 – 12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rusnak in view of Haverstock ('640).

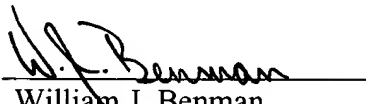
By this paper, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 2, 13, and 19 and canceled Claims 14 and 20. New Claims 21 – 35 have been added for consideration. The amended claims and new claims highlight the method and apparatus of the invention by which document sharing is effected as a function of a user's authority or access rights.

In the above-identified Office Action, the Examiner suggested that Smithies teaches signature verification. However, it is clear that neither Rusnak nor Smithies teach document sharing based on a user's authority or access rights as opposed to the user's identity per se. Hence, while a user's identity may be verified for the purpose of granting access to the system, rights are confirmed in accordance with the invention to regulate access to certain files. As per Claim 35, this is effected through the use of a database in which access rights for various users are stored. After an access right is confirmed, a session key is used to effect encryption, transmission and decryption of the data of interest.

The amended claims and the new claims are supported fully in the present Specification. See Fig. 2 and page 6, line 11 through page 10.

Reconsideration, allowance and passage to issue are therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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